Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method of monitoring and evaluating guard patrols of one or more sites, comprising the steps of:

defining at least one checkpoint to identify at least one location to be patrolled;

defining at least one patrol detail record on a computer readable medium to structure information related to said at least one location to be patrolled;

detecting the information obtained from said guard patrol;

reading said information upon detection and storing said information within said at least one patrol detail record; and

using said information to monitor the progress and evaluate the thoroughness of guard patrols.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said checkpoint defining step comprises assigning memory buttons with information selected from the group consisting of officers, incidents, commands and locations.

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein said patrol detail record defining step comprises programming a general purpose computer with information describing records selected from the group consisting of clients, facilities, groups and locations.

4. A method according to claim 1 wherein said detecting step comprises having a downloader sense that a reader has been inserted within said downloader, said downloader signaling a general purpose computer that said downloader is ready to transfer information from a reader.

5. A method according to claim 1 wherein said reading and storing step comprises receiving reader information from said downloader via a communication means and saving said reader information onto a computer readable medium organized by said at least one predefined patrol record.

6. A method according to claim 1 wherein said reader information formatted into said predefined patrol records are displayed in a form used to efficiently monitor and evaluate guard patrols.

7. A data processing system for monitoring and evaluating guard patrols of one or more sites comprising:

a central computing device and a display;

means for gathering information obtained from one or more checkpoints during a guard patrol of one or more sites;

means for detecting when said gathered information is ready to be downloaded into said central computing device; and

means for downloading said gathered information into said central computing device.

8.   A system according to claim 7, wherein said information gathering means comprises means for automatically reading information from checkpoints.

9.   A system according to claim 7, wherein said checkpoints are devices selected from the group consisting of touch memory buttons, bar codes, magnetic strips, radio frequency transmitters, radio frequency transceivers, ultrasonic transmitters and ultrasonic transceivers.

10.   A system according to claim 7, wherein said detecting means comprises a downloader having a reader port that detects placement of a reader within said reader port, wherein said downloader identifies the specific type of reader detected and said downloader implements the proper communication protocol for said specific type of reader to download said gathered information to said central computing device.

11.   A system according to claim 7, wherein said information downloading means comprises a downloader coupled to said central computing device by a communication means selected from the group consisting of electrical cables, telephone lines, cellular transmission, the Internet, radio frequency transmission and satellite transmission.

12.   A system according to claim 11, wherein said checkpoints are comprised of touch memory buttons assigned to information about items selected from the group of officers, incidents, commands and locations.

13.   A system according to claim 11, wherein said checkpoints are comprised of touch

memory buttons programmed with information about items selected from the group of officers, incidents, commands and locations.

14. A system according to claim 12, wherein said central computing device detects unassigned memory buttons inserted within a touch memory port on said downloader causing said data processing system to request that said memory button be assigned to patrol information.

15. A system according to claim 7, wherein said checkpoints are comprised of touch memory buttons assigned to information about items selected from the group of officers, incidents, commands and locations.

16. A system according to claim 7, wherein said checkpoints are comprised of touch memory buttons programmed with information about items selected from the group of officers, incidents, commands and locations.

17. A computer program product for use with a data processing system for monitoring and evaluating guard patrols of one or more sites, said computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for gathering information obtained from one or more checkpoints during a guard patrol of one or more sites;

the computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for detecting when said gathered information is ready to be downloaded into said data processing system; and

the computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied in said medium for downloading said gathered information into said data processing system.

18.   A computer program product according to claim 17, further comprising computer readable program code means for defining at least one patrol detail record on a computer readable medium to structure information related to said guard patrol.

19.   A computer program product according to claim 17, wherein said patrol detail record is comprised of information selected from the group consisting of officer checkpoints, incident checkpoints, location checkpoints, clients, facilities, groups and locations.

20.   A computer program product according to claim 17, further comprising computer readable program code means for displaying said at least one patrol detail record on a display in a hierarchical organization comprised of one or more nodes simplifying review of said at least one patrol detail record.

21.   A computer program product according to claim 17, wherein said computer program product is comprised of computer readable program code means that are modular thereby allowing said computer readable program code means to be individually replaced without modification to other existing computer readable program code means that make up said computer program product.

22.   A computer program product according to claim 17, further comprising a

computer readable program code means for printing one or more reports to a printer of said

information obtained from one or more checkpoints during a guard patrol.

23.   A computer program product according to claim 22, wherein said reports are

comprised of predetermined default information relating to said guard patrol.

24.   A computer program product according to claim 22, wherein said reports are

comprised of select information specifically determined by a user of said computer program

product.

25.   A computer program product according to claim 24, further comprising computer

readable program code means for grouping select information reports into a batch, wherein said

computer readable program code means automatically causes all select information reports in

said batch to print to said printer.

26.   A computer program product according to claim 22, wherein said reports further

comprise customization selected from the group consisting of logos, cover sheets, photographs,

detailed headings, bitmaps, watermarks, drawings, illustrations, trademarks and patrol statistics.

27.   A computer program product according to claim 17, further comprising computer

readable program code means for downloading said gathered information into said data

processing system independently of said computer program product.

28. A computer program product according to claim 17, further comprising computer readable program code means for displaying on a display connected to said data processing system said information obtained from one or more checkpoints during a guard patrol of one or more sites.

29. A computer program product for use with a data processing system for independently downloading information obtained from one or more checkpoints during a guard patrol of one or more sites.

30. A method of defining rules for performing a guard patrol of one or more checkpoints, the method comprising the steps of:

(a)   assigning an identifier to a rule to be defined;

(b)   assigning a date range during which said rule is valid;

(c)   determining a schedule for when said rule must be followed; and

(d)   setting the number of required checkpoint visits for each location of said guard patrol.

31. A method according to claim 30, wherein said date range of said step (b) is selected from the group consisting of the rule being valid indefinitely, the rule being invalid after a specified date and the rule being valid only between an assigned range of dates.

32. A method according to claim 30, wherein said schedule of said step (c) is selected from the group consisting of specific days of each week, specific days of each month, and specific days of each year.

33.   A method according to claim 32, further including the step of determining a time range for each day during which said rule is effective.

34.   A method according to claim 30, further including the step of reporting an exception anytime a checkpoint is not patrolled pursuant to said defined rule.